

No.3 News From Poland 1937

Series V

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Polish Proverbs

A nation's proverbs tell us something about the nation; its physical environment, mental attitudes, deeper convictions. Here are a few Polish proverbs in current use. Out of the village life of older days came these: "Don't call the wolf out of the forest", meaning, in modern parlance, don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles you. "Then the wolf will be fed and the sheep remain whole", a Pole says when he sees how both to eat his cake and to have it. The proverbial, and real, Polish hospitality finds happy expression in the proverb, "Guest in the house, God in the house." Basic religious faith is represented by the proverb, "Who begins with God finishes everything", while religion is very practically regarded in such proverbs as "As James treats God, God treats James", (Kuba in Polish), and, "He who guards himself is guarded by God".

If a hunter was inclined to brag a bit, some one would say, "Man fires the gun but God carries the bullet", a proverb of wide application signifying God's part in directing the affairs of life. A proverb excellent in Polish but not easy to get when translated is, "The master's eye fattens the horses", meaning that personal supervision is essential to good results. Among the proverbs of morals we find "As the master so is the trade", "A word passes out the size of a sparrow and returns the size of an ox", and, "You will sleep as comfortably as you make your bed".

Among practical proverbs are these; "He who comes late harms himself", "Work is not a hare—it will not run away", and "Who has six cooks has nothing to eat."

One finds parallels of English proverbs in "The cauldron criticizes the pot though it is itself greasy", "One hand washes the other", and "Before you speak two words think three times", for people are after all much the same the world over.

The wit, rhyme and snap of these sayings is somewhat lost in translation, but the ideas reveal both people and environment. As I write I have over 1100 Polish proverbs before me. One of our housemaids had a proverb for everything that happened all day long, many of them portraying the homely, deep wisdom of the peasants, the life of the village, and of the great manor houses.



Photo Plat.

Polish mountain cottage in winter.

The Y Growing

The Krakow YMCA, with a daily average attendance of over 1400 is beginning to wonder where to put them all, and is talking of the necessity of adding a wing to its building. They have the land.

The Gdynia YMCA has bought its lot and architects are at work planning the building, to cost about \$80,000. The membership of this live young Association has passed the 450 mark. Its two immediate projects are the securing of larger temporary quarters and the building of a \$7000 summer camp in the "Kasubian Switzerland" an hour's ride southwest of Gdynia.

The Warsaw YMCA has secured larger quarters for its working boys' department, now enrolling 425 members, with a goal of 750. The corresponding division in Krakow also has over 400 members.

These branches have been so successful that the Warsaw YMCA is now developing a plan of erecting five branches for working people in different populous industrial sections of the city. The city authorities have approved the plan and are cooperating. The project is receiving marked commendation.

In January 1937 different persons used the physical department of the Warsaw YMCA as members of organized classes and groups. Came near being 3000!



Count Krasicki being presented to the Maharajah by Dr. Mott.

Conference in India

The delegate of the Polish YMCA to the conference of the World's Alliance in Mysore, India, Count Andrzej Krasicki, general secretary of the National Council of the Polish YMCA, has returned to Poland and is reporting his experiences to various groups. He was impressed with the fine fellowship he enjoyed with the representatives of the YMCA of many other lands, with the courtesy, culture, and hospitality of the Maharajah of Mysore, whose guests the members of the conference were, with the serious work done in the discussion meetings, and with the general air of harmony which prevailed throughout the conference.

The Maharajah and his Premier took special interest in our Polish delegate, the latter having him in to dinner, the former presenting him, upon leaving, with his autographed photograph in a silver frame bearing the crest of his house in gold.

Count Krasicki joined a section of the British delegation in London and made the trip with them, receiving many courtesies at their hands. He invited Dr. Mott to revisit Poland, which he will do either this April or in 1938.

On many bulletin boards enroute our delegate saw "News From Poland".

Getting Better

As the reports of the great banks and of the various ministries appear, it becomes very evident that 1936 brought improvement in Poland's economic situation. The Bank of Poland made a profit of 9,300,000 zl, roughly \$1,750,000; not a vast fortune, but nevertheless real money. The directors have voted an 8% dividend, nice to receive. Deposits in the National Economic Bank increased 87,000,000 zloty, over \$16,000,000. Industrial production increased during the year, from a ratio of 60 in January to a ratio of 82 in October. The national budget is again balanced, with a snug plus at the end of November. But best of all, the peasants are now receiving about 50% more for their grain than they received a year ago, with no corresponding rise in the prices of things the peasants buy. This is an agricultural country and it is always just as rich or poor as its peasants.

The Negative Side

The above situation is a cause of rejoicing. But Poland's joy is moderated by the existence of two huge national problems; overpopulation and lack of raw materials. To put it somewhat graphically, Poland's two great economic problems are deficiency of raw materials and excess of raw population. If the nation had better access to raw materials it could do more to work up the raw population into occupied, earning, and useful citizens. As it is, tens of thousands of valuable human beings sit idle, people who, as America has learned from valuable experience with Polish immigrants, can be developed into industrious and skilful workers. Poland, sadly, must send more of these people away. Just where? That is a world problem.

The economically distressed elements of Poland's population are the Catholic and Orthodox peasants and the Jewish proletariat. This, as a world problem, will require a world solution.

Raw Materials

As to raw materials for its already established industries, Poland needs chiefly cotton and wool for its excellent textile mills, and iron and copper for its foundries and industries. Jute also is needed. Poland has good basic industries which could easily be expanded, thus employing thousands more of the surplus population, if raw materials were available at more nearly standard prices.

Where are these and other raw materials? Chiefly in the United States, the British Empire, and Russia. Poland's access to them under favorable economic conditions, this also is a world problem. For Poland is a land of nearly 35,000,000 people, and what 35,000,000 Europeans need is of broad interest.



Our delegate and several Madras Y men.

